

Again three days of rain. My head is tired, my will restless, and my personality indecisive. Numerous chores make all real work impossible, and that is the only thing that would rest me. I dare not go back to my novel for fear of blunting my emotion and zeal. I have begun studying the piano again, for the good of my health, but not methodically. My handwriting is becoming uglier. I sleep badly; I tremble and twitch the way wild animals do.

We have given up Boylesve's mediocre novel⁶ and taken up with trepidation *Pochekonie dautrefois* by the wonderful Shchedrin.⁷

Friday, at Charmoy's, a strange evening. In the studio, cluttered with huge statues fantastically lighted by a score of candles ingeniously stuck here and there, on the corner of benches, in the folds of the enormous angels supporting the monument of Beethoven of the robes —in that studio, overheated by a little cast-iron stove, Jose, his wife, and I wait for the Princess de Broglie and Miss Barney.

Around ten o'clock we hear the Princess's automobile, which appears in the blackness at the door. The Princess is wearing an ermine wrap, which she drops into Charmoy's hands. A gown of black velvet covering only the lower half of her body sets off a vast expanse of lustrous skin; the gown hangs from Jet straps. Her face is small and tired; her coiffure, almost virginal, strives unsuccessfully to make her look younger. No wrinkles, however, but her features are painfully tight.

As soon as she comes in, she stares at me through her lorgnette, whose gold handle is linked by a small chain to a delicate bracelet of rubies.

Her intention of charming is flagrant.

On the back of a wicker chair, which she considers "not very inviting/* a fur is stretched; on the floor a foot-warmer for her little feet, which she also wraps in a shawl. Near her, behind her,

Miss Barney
takes refuge in an eloquent silence and lets the
Princess strut.

Back in France, SO Janizary. Liverdun

I like this landscape in which the washings of the
earth bathe the
grass with ochre. Parallel to the train a stream flows
evenly; a little
higher up, a little farther from us, a canal with a towed
boat on it. Be-
yond the canal the ground rises still more; fields
dismantled by the win-
ter; a patch of rocks; then a sky of low clouds. Trees
border the canal.
Lower down, in the meadows that the stream has just
flooded, half-

⁶ Most likely *Le BelAvenir (The Fine Future)* (1905).

⁷ *Bygone Dags in Poshekhonie*, first published in French
translation in
1892. Poshekhonie is an imaginary region created by
Shchedrin to symbolize
the backward manorial society that he satirizes.